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BELCHER'S

12.
ADDRESS TO HUMANITY:

CONTAINING,

A LETTER TO DR. THOMAS MONRO;

A RECEIPT TO MAKE A LUNATIC, AND SEIZE
HIS ESTATE;

AND

A SKETCH OF A TRUE SMILING HYENA.

And many a plague succeed, and many a woe,
And long, long, long, of Hell the bellows blow.

From the Author's Galaxy.



SOLD BY ALLEN AND WEST, NO. 15, PATERNOSTER-ROW;
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Also may be had of ALLEN & WEST,

PEACE AND RECONCILIATION;

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

A Letter to Mr. Fox.

Interspersed with Considerations on Universal Suffrage; on the Coalition of Mr. Fox and Lord NORTH, and the Propriety of a Coalition with Mr. THELWALL; a Prediction of Emigration and Depopulation, should not a Repeal of the late obnoxious Acts and a Reform take place; and Anecdotes of the unexampled Persecution of the Author, the subject of the *Address to Humanity*, &c.

IN THE PRESS,

Belcher's Cream of Knowledge,

Skimmed from the Milk of Human Savageness, and matured in the School of Adversity.

The Soul's dark cottage, batter'd and decay'd,
Lets in new light through chinks that time hath made.

WALLER.

* * * This Work will not be published in periodical Numbers, but each portion will be in itself complete.

ADVERTISEMENT.

SHOULD my injuries, of the most crying kind imaginable, of which the following pages are a sketch, be the means of turning the thoughts of men in power to atrocities far beyond words to express (which, through the practices of the law, are not yet at an end respecting me), I shall have the consolation that my sufferings have not been in vain. At all events, sacrificing my feelings to a faint hope of public good, I hope that, without impiety, I may say with Sir John Scott, who has my thanks, Liberavi animam meam; or rather, that it has always been free, and sometimes smiled, even in the bosom of horror.

W. B.

ADVERTISEMENT.



A
L E T T E R

TO

Dr. THOMAS MONRO.

SIR,

BEING, by your assistance, together with that of another real Gentleman of the Faculty, restored from legal death, and the most insupportable situation possible to a man of feeling, that of imputed, accompanied with the disabilities of real, insanity; and having been advertised in the news-papers of my provincial residence, whilst I was just as much in my senses as I am at present, and at the same time furnished one of those papers with a series of essays, &c. &c. after mature deliberation I am induced now to make known some circumstances

B

of

of my own case, a relation of the whole of which would fill a folio.

After the incredible conduct of a man who, after taking a handsome fee, and making several false promises, doomed me, as far as was in his power, to an entire broken heart; with an outrage to common sense, and the wonder of the Attorney General, who declared it was a *d——d odd thing*; though Christian charity forbids a literal interpretation of the term *d——d*; after this, I am the more obliged to you, and because, almost the moment you saw me, you, with that intuitive sagacity which is visible in your countenance, pronounced me perfectly in my senses, and, soon convinced that I had given all the proofs of sanity possible to be given, readily consented to give a speedy certificate of it.

Yes, I declare on my soul, that it was impossible to doubt, as no one who knew me did, or could doubt of my sanity; and no one unacquainted with the affair ever thought of my being otherwise. Notwithstanding which, a
man,

man, who calls himself the friend of the unfortunate, took money, &c. of me, and resisted all this demonstration; and was, I have reason to believe, privy to a dark anonymous statement to the Attorney General, whether demonstration itself, it could be called no less, was evidence of my sanity; and whether the restoration of my estate would be the consequence of a *superfedeas*? Good God! yet for such complication of injustice, treachery, and tyranny, no special Acts of Parliament are enacted, no fine, imprisonment, pillory and transportation provided.

You, Sir, particularly expressed your wonder (wonderful indeed has been my fate) at my being able to settle my mind to the composition of a series of literary works in such circumstances, which I will now explain to you with the utmost sincerity and truth. That serenity of mind and peace, surpassing your understanding though of the very first rate, was chiefly owing to the conviction of a superintending Providence; and that misfortune is no more than a reasonable tribute to the mi-

fery of the world. Nor let this be deemed cant and hypocrisy, which I abhor, by those ignorant of the consolation of religion to devout minds deprived of every other. To the aid of religion I added also that of philosophy and metaphysics, a kind of a medium between both, and attended closely to the resources of my mind, when pressed and strained to the utmost, at which times I usually found my imagination assisted, as it were, by collision, when suffering under the most unutterable anguish.

During my irremediable confinement, I was driven to the verge of desperation and real lunacy, through want of sleep, occasioned (I speak as if on oath) chiefly by the thinness of the partitions of the apartments, whereby I was disturbed by night with snoring and coughing, and by day with ranting and raving; so that I know not what I would not have given for an hour's peace, and am now astonished that I survived all. The poet says that, at the point of death,

both worlds at once we view,
When standing on the threshold of the new.

Having

Having thus closely attended to the operations of my mind when urged to the brink of insanity, as to form an idea of its reality, the best account I can give of it is, that in real derangement the *mind is rather out of the body* than the body out of the mind, according to the expression, "out of one's mind." I shall not, however, say all, lest I should be deemed a fanatic, after having in a manner learned to live in mental fire, and experienced the reality of religion which enabled its martyrs to endure real flames. Flames I never endured; but when as perfectly in my senses as I trust I am at present, I have been bound and tortured in a strait waistcoat, fettered, crammed with physic with a bullock's horn, and knocked down, and at length declared a lunatic by a Jury that never saw me; and, what would make a man tear his flesh from his bones, all through affected kindness. Another dreadful aggravation is, that every degree of resentment against the authors of their ruin, is considered as a presumption of remaining insanity in the sufferer, who has hardly any chance of restoration without their consent, though he adduces thousands

of proofs that the whole was a scene of iniquity thus countenanced and encouraged. And so dead is society to these notorious breaches of it, that hardly an instance has occurred of legal redress obtained, even for the loss of property, the least part (though mine has amounted to thousands of pounds) of the incalculable and inexpressible injury.

The Attorney General,* who has my thanks for making the motion, being fond of the ejaculation *Liberavi animam meam*, would use it with increased propriety, were he officially to attack a system of outrage that beggars description, and commences with depriving the sufferer of his property, the means of redress; a system controlled by no provisional guard in the nature of a Grand Jury; but a person, body, and often mind, is at the mercy of interested or offended relations, who thus have it in their power to inflict, without the charge of any crime, a punishment in comparison of which,

* Mr. Gurney was my other own Counsel; but I pay all, as I suffered all.

which, transportation for life, or death itself, would be mercy.

To what particular cause I ascribe my persecution, of a kind the *more* severe, because attended with indignity and contempt, instead of honour, its proper companion, is not material to the public: but they may be assured that these kinds of enormities are practised; and I am content to be branded with the appellation of liar, if I have exaggerated this sketch. But as if I were doomed to be the object of contradictions, I was found a lunatic, whilst composing remarks on Johnson's Lives of the English Poets, inserted in the Gentleman's Magazine, and afterwards published by Hookham, under the title of the Art of Criticism: and was declared *non compos*, and unable to attend to my affairs, which a respectable attorney kindly took into his hands, for me with a salary he procured under the seal, at a time when I contributed to Young's Annals of Husbandry, and used a farm of 100 acres entirely myself, who was at last extremely unwilling to part with his perquisites. I was afterwards still deemed a lunatic

natic for years and years, when none except those acquainted with my history ever thought of such a thing; and a certain person alluded to declared I was the most extraordinary one he ever knew, yet took my money and books with a grin, and then bilked me. And to crown all, whilst endeavouring to prove myself not a lunatic, and become a fresh prey to savages, I was summoned on a coroner's inquest about fifty yards from my own house, on which I thought it best to serve, and did accordingly.

Of rapacity and brutality, and all that is shocking to human feelings, a mad-house, that premature coffin of mind, body, and estate, is to an imputed lunatic, the concentration. A trade to which seventeen years of the prime of my life has been sacrificed: a trade known to all, and disregarded by all, the connivance at which is a horrible disgrace to government and to society; which, whilst I forgive where forgiveness is due, it shall be the object of my life to expose to detestation and abhorrence. Yes, on this subject I have an especial right to speak—I owe it to God, my country,
and

and humanity to speak, and I will speak, and, if possible, make my hearers ears.

Mr. Erskine lately swore he would not die a slave. I hope that he will not: yet in a nation in which such outrages as I have experienced are practised with impunity, and their prosecution discountenanced, no man is safe from living and dying in a strait waistcoat, in which I have lain whole winter nights bound, and cold from want of bed-clothes, a sufficiency not being allowed me, whilst as perfectly in my senses as I am now. Would to God that he, since those whose duty it is to investigate them shun them, would dart his lightning on scenes on which day has never shone! that miscreants to whom I bid defiance, may not for ever fatten on unspeakable calamity. If the publication of my case is dangerous, so is likewise silence: Should I at last perish, let it be in the face of day.

It sometimes happens that obscure persons, through extraordinary circumstances, become the instruments of good. And I will hope

C

that

that the present Lord Chancellor, whose readiness in doing me justice, heretofore an entire stranger to it, as far as he was applied to, has my sincere thanks, and whose humanity and integrity in his high office are universally acknowledged, will strike at the root of this enormous evil, and thereby record his name on the roll of the benefactors of mankind.

A Victim to the Trade of Lunacy.

POSTSCRIPT.

You, Sir, as I have observed, having expressed your wonder at my writings, the offspring of such very unpropitious circumstances, I take this opportunity of recommending to the favour of the public, my poetical effusions (effusions, I say, the versions of Scripture itself being not servile) in the *Galaxy*, the composition of which was an alleviation of my misery, and at times the source of pleasure; for barren is the rock interspersed with no patches of verdure. A work which having been long buried in the same living

grave with its master, may possibly now partake of his resurrection.

Had I known how dreadfully this couplet of the *Galaxy*—

*And many a plague succeed, and many a woe,
And long, long, long, of Hell the bellows blow—*

would have been verified in me, I should have been overwhelmed with despair, totally beyond the philosophy of any human being; so true it is that ignorance of the future, that anticipating Lethe, is the best boon of human life.

My favourite author, Cowley, says that those safe-landed no more regard the wind; yet though I do not believe Locke's doctrine of material traces worn in the mind, I find Pope's assertion, that of all sciences the hardest is to forget, more truly verified.

I perfectly remember that when, on the 8th of October, 1778, I was overwhelmed with astonishment at being carried to Hackney, to take my abode with idiots and real or supposed

madmen, some of them just as mad as myself,
these lines of Milton occurred to me:

Hail, horrors! hail,
Infernal world! and thou profoundest hell,
Receive thy new possessor, one who brings
A mind not to be chang'd by place or time.

For had I been the devil, I could hardly have
been used worse.

*** The *Galaxy*, containing near 300 quarto pages of
sacred and miscellaneous poetry and prose, having been, as
might be supposed, blasted in the bud by very bitter winds,
may be now had at No. 9, Thornhaugh-Street, Bedford-
Square, for half-a-crown, not one third of its value, if some
good judges may be depended on. However, such a book
of poetry, warm from the brain of a Lunatic, ought to ex-
cite the curiosity of a nation celebrated for humanity; espe-
cially as the receipt shall be wholly applied to a Clergy-
man and his Family, actually starving in prison.

THE
TRADE OF LUNACY;
OR,
AN APPROVED RECEIPT,

To make a Lunatic, and seize his Estate.

WATCH for some season of vexation, and then, by proper insinuations and a pitying tone of voice, work up the patient to a due pitch of passion; then lay on blisters; and before his agitation of spirits has time to subside, hurry him away violently to a mad-house, so denominated, that is to say, one of the graves of mind, body, and estate, much more dreadful than the Bastille and Inquisition. There, as an earnest of taking possession of all his property, the means of redress, pick his pockets of every thing, totally confound his understanding by the strangeness of his treatment, and lay him in an apartment of which the partitions are so thin

thin that he be kept awake by coughing, snoring, and raving; and then allege as a proof of madness, that he sleeps ill; but do not destroy him quite, unless bribed high, but give him opium to enable him to endure farther tortures and at the same time render him delirious. And should his stomach reject the plenty of physic with which you must be sure to ply him, the use of a bullock's horn will be very proper. Use him also with all manner of savage indignity; and be sure not to forget the strait waistcoat, nor also handcuffs and fetters occasionally; they being no less powerful arguments in the hands of mad-house-keepers, than cannon in those of state-tyrants. When the physicians, by appointment of Parliament, visit the house, take particular care they do not see the patient alone; but the master of the house must be sure to be with them himself, lest something improper should possibly transpire.

In the mean time, with all imaginable secrecy and kindness, and with tears in your eyes, sue out a commission of Lunacy against the unfortunate patient. And should his patience

tience far exceed Job's, so as to erase human feelings from his mind, and he be not totally undone; suffer nobody whatever to come near him, nor let him be seen by the Jury, to whom you may allege what you will against him without danger of contradiction; as the managers, commissioners, attornies, counsel, and possibly the leaders of the jury, will be of your choosng, and at your disposal; whilst doctors, lawyers, committees, rent-gatherers, mad-house-keepers, ruffians, and various other respectable brutes, make plenty of work for each other, among whom the property of the unfortunate patient should be liberally scattered.

So shall the trade of Lunacy prosper, and become more and more honourable and respectable.

N. B. The friends and guardians of a lunatic need very seldom be afraid that the state of his mind will be regarded as an object, unless they mean that it should; but may depend on it that their will and choice will determine whether he is in his senses or not.

Sketch

Sketch of an Helleborean Savage, or Smiling Hyena, famous in a Province over which the Devil is said to do his business, by which the Author was severely bitten, and Sir John Scott induced to declare it was a D——D ODD THING.

THIS animal is a non-descript of a mixed species. Form obtuse—body black—head grey—teeth and paws on the decline—visage smiling, especially at the sight of shining metal, of which its paws are extremely retentive—heart supposed to be a kind of tough white leather.

N. B. He doth ravish the rich when he getteth him into his den.

FINIS.

